

## **Secretary of State Connie Lawson's Biography**

Connie Lawson is Indiana's 61<sup>st</sup> Secretary of State. As Indiana's Chief Elections Official, she is focused on ensuring the integrity and security for our state's elections. Since taking office, Secretary Lawson has championed sweeping election reforms, and has led the effort to clean Indiana's voter rolls. A tireless advocate for increasing Indiana's financial literacy and protecting Indiana investors, Secretary Lawson educates Hoosiers about smart money decisions and fights for stringent penalties for white collar criminals. She has also partnered with Indiana's motor vehicle industry to ensure the best possible customer service, including prompt title delivery. Secretary Lawson is directing substantial innovation and leveraging cutting edge technology to improve how businesses interact with government.

Secretary Lawson is not just an advocate for election security. She is also working to modernize elections through vote centers. As a state Senator, Secretary Lawson authored legislation allowing any county in the state to move to the vote center model. As Secretary of State, she has worked to educate voters and elected officials on the cost saving benefits and convenience of the vote center model. Thanks to her leadership, 26 counties and counting have made the decision to adopt voter centers.

She is committed to putting financial criminals behind bars, and believes that stronger financial literacy is the best way to protect Hoosiers from falling prey to scams. Since taking office, Secretary Lawson has taken on the additional duty of educating not only investors, but educating all Hoosiers on the importance of being financially fit. She travels the state speaking with high school students about credit cards and how they impact future financial wellbeing, chatting with senior citizens about how to protect their retirement nest eggs and reaching out to newlyweds about marrying their finances. Hoosiers' financial education is often overlooked, but Secretary Lawson is working to end this cycle by covering the taboo topic of money.

Putting scam artists behind bars and helping victims take back their stolen funds is also a top priority. Since its inception, Secretary Lawson's Prosecution Assistance Unit has notched 2,034 charges against Indiana fraudsters and more than 918 years of prison time. She secured a multi-million dollar settlement with the Indiana State Teachers Association to repay Hoosier teachers who were defrauded in a Ponzi scheme.

She's also working to modernize the way the state does business by leading an initiative to create a robust, streamlined business development tool that will allow Hoosier entrepreneurs to open for business faster. Secretary Lawson is leading the effort to create a business portal that will ultimately serve as businesses' single point of contact for registration, filing, reporting and making payments across state agencies. It will ease the burden and reduce redundancy for

Hoosier businesses when it comes to the information and documentation they must provide various state agencies.

Secretary Lawson lends her substantial leadership experience to help great organizations. She is a regional vice president of the National Association of Secretaries of State, an honorary governor of the Richard G. Lugar Excellence in Public Service Series, the honorary chairwoman of the Lupus Foundation of Indiana, and a co-chair of the Hendricks County United Way to name just a few.

Prior to serving as Secretary of State, Lawson served in the Indiana Senate for sixteen years, where she accomplished significant legislative success. Respected across the aisle, she quickly earned the admiration of her colleagues and made history in 2006 when she was selected as the first woman to serve as Majority Floor Leader in the Indiana Senate.

During her term as a state senator, she authored legislation designed to have a lasting, positive impact on Indiana. She championed local government reform efforts, moved the school board elections from the primary to the general, helped lead the state's redistricting process and advocated for stronger awareness of health issues such as cervical cancer, lupus and youth suicide prevention. Her efforts were recognized when she received Mental Health America of Indiana's Lifetime Achievement Award, the Indiana Association of Rehabilitation Facilities' Career Recognition Award and ARC of Indiana's Lifetime Achievement award for her efforts to help raise awareness and improve the lives of disabled Hoosiers.

Before joining the Indiana Senate, Lawson served as Clerk of the Hendricks County Circuit Court for eight years. During her tenure, she was named elections administrator of the year by the Indiana State Election Board and clerk of the year by the Indiana Clerk's Association, both in 1993. The Association of Indiana Counties awarded her a similar award in 1996. She also served as president of the Indiana Clerk's Association and chair of the groups' legislative committee.

As a public servant, Lawson has been a true inspiration to women in government, an agent of change for Indiana counties and a determined advocate for the prevention of diseases that would rob us of our loved ones. She has been recognized as one of the Indianapolis Business Journal's Women of Influence and she received the Zup's Imagination Award for her service to United Way of Central Indiana. In addition to her public work, she and her husband Jack own Lawson & Company, an auctioneer and real estate company.